

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

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GOV. EASLEY ANNOUNCES HISTORIC GAINS ON 2002-03 ABCs TESTS
Student test scores reach highest level, achievement gap closing

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley today announced historic gains made by North Carolina students and schools on the 2002-03 ABCs accountability test. By maintaining the state's course on education accountability and standards, N.C. schools posted the highest-ever percentage of students performing at grade level and the achievement gap narrowed significantly across all racial groups.

"These gains prove that our commitment to protecting our investments in education is paying off," said Easley. "Even in tough economic times our students and our schools are making dramatic progress."

"Our next challenge is continuing this progress. We must continue expanding our *More at Four* pre-kindergarten program, continue reducing class size in grades K-3, continue working to recruit and retain high-quality teachers and continue creating new and redesigned high schools. Only then will North Carolina be the most competitive state in the nation for economic growth."

The ABCs results, released today at Wakefield High School in Wake County, show that 94 percent of schools in the state met expected growth or better, and nearly three-fourths of all schools (73 percent) met the standards for high growth in 2002-03.

And with increasing scores, the achievement gap is also closing. Black and Native American students gained 10 percentage points each this past year. Latino students gained 8 points.

Sixty-one percent of all schools, or 1,359, earned recognition in 2002-03 as either Schools of Distinction or Schools of Excellence, the two highest performance categories under the state's accountability model. Only 6 percent of schools had less than expected growth in student achievement. That figure is down from 25 percent in 2001-02.

For more information about the ABCs report, please contact Lou Fabrizio, Director of Accountability Services for the Department of Public Instruction at 919/807-3770. The complete ABCs report is available online in a searchable format at <http://abcs.ncpublicschools.org>.

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